

## Expanded Availability Stress?



**M**any employees have become accessible around the clock, thanks to technology. Even a sound sleep can be interrupted by an unexpected middle-of-the-night business “emergency.” “Anytime, anywhere” communication made possible by PDAs (personal digital assistants) has created “expanded availability stress.” Be careful and be self-aware. If you can’t completely detach yourself from your work, it can take a toll on your job satisfaction. The risk of burnout becomes higher. Workers are unable to completely relax and enjoy rejuvenating leisure activities because a phone call can always interrupt the moment. If you experience this perpetual connection to work, seek a way to find a better work-life balance. Your employee assistance program can help. Your employer wants you ready and able—not ready to leave.

## Be Prepared for Spring Weather



**P**lan now to protect yourself and your family if severe weather occurs this spring. Listen for and follow instructions and guidance offered by local emergency preparedness experts. Have emergency supplies on hand. Don’t find yourself rushing to the store at the last second only to face empty shelves. Get a kit, make a plan, and be informed. Visit the updated federal government Web site [Ready.gov](http://Ready.gov). You will find helpful checklists and planning tips.

## Disrespect Is Contagious



**E**mployees not prone to being negative can slowly succumb to behavioral changes if exposed to other’s negativity long enough. The same goes for disrespect. If disrespect creeps into workplace relationships, the risk is eventual loss of job satisfaction, struggles with absenteeism, and even staff turnover. Struggling with disrespect? During regular staff meetings, discuss frequently what respectful communication means to you and your peers. Ask, “What can we do to experience more respectful communication with each other?” Don’t focus on past events. Instead, focus on what can be done to advance respect. You’ll see respectful behavior increase, and a happier workplace will reinforce the changes.

## Sleep Tips for A Second Job at Night



**I**f you’re working a night job (“graveyard shift”) to supplement your income, be sure to get sleep tips that are freely available online or in your library. Learn about sleep/wake cycles and how light, diet, and family stress can affect performance and safety. For example, it’s advised not to wake up and go straight to work at 11 p.m. Instead, wake up a bit earlier and participate in vigorous activity to get your body “switched on” and ready for work. It’s a good idea to consult with your doctor about your new work schedule before beginning an exercise program. Source: American Academy of Sleep

Medicine

## Alcohol Awareness Month

# Teenage Alcoholism



**T**he most recent data available from the federal government on the number of adolescents treated for alcoholism is more than 15 years old, but there is no reason to believe that the problem of teen alcoholism has diminished. Alcohol is still the number one drug of choice for teenagers although other abused drugs get more attention in media public service announcements. Between 1992 and 1997, the number of teenagers treated for alcoholism rose nearly 25 percent. Eighty percent of adults seeking alcoholism treatment report first being intoxicated before age 18. Sober facts: Adolescents who begin drinking before age 15 are four times more likely to develop alcohol dependence than those who begin drinking at age 21. Generally, an adolescent's risk for alcohol dependence in the future decreases by 14 percent with each additional year that drinking is delayed. Beyond the illegality of supplying alcohol to underage youth, is there any better argument for not doing it? There is no credible research demonstrating that serving alcohol to children *under adult supervision in the safety of their own home* will prevent or deter later onset of alcohol abuse or alcoholism. The fact that alcoholism has strong genetic linkages argues that doing so may hasten the onset of this addictive disease.

## Fight Deadlines with Deadlines



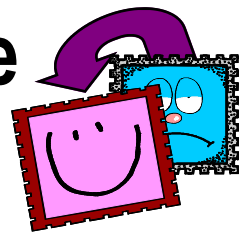
**I**f you hate procrastination yet frequently find yourself in its clutches, the following strategy may provide a renewed sense of control and freedom from work pressure. When handed an assignment, decide to complete it within 75 percent of the allotted time. Determine date and time for completion. Then, treat the earlier deadline as the real thing. Stoke your motivation by getting someone to whom you are accountable inquire about your progress halfway through. This productivity strategy does not seem to generate the same type of anguish otherwise experienced with a *real* deadline. Relish the positive feelings of finishing early. Plan a reward—a movie, night out, or mini celebration. Become more proactive and creative with deadlines and you'll stay out of the grips of procrastination.

## Getting to Know Your Neighbors



**D**o you know your neighbors? Many people don't know the last name of next-door neighbors, although they may periodically wave to them. You may not only be missing out on an opportunity for work-life balance, not knowing your neighbors also can be a safety and support issue. Failure to nurture these relationships may prevent you from seeking help during personal emergencies or cause you to feel hesitant about offering assistance when it's needed. Here's how to turn things around without trying hard: (1) Instead of hitting the couch, relax in a chair outside, see who walks by, and say, "hello." (2) Take a walk in the neighborhood, and when you meet others, greet them. This tactic also counts as exercise! (3) If one is held, attend a neighborhood get-together. Perhaps you thought about going to the neighborhood barbeque last year. This year put the date on your calendar and attend. (4) Have a garage sale—a surefire way to get to know neighbors.

## How to Change Your Mood



**T**here's nothing unusual about a difficult or "bad" mood, but sometimes people remain in this state of mind hoping it will lift like a morning fog. A chronically bad mood, however, might indicate an illness like depression. Depression is more than the occasional "blue" day and should be evaluated by a health professional. Many things influence moods. Two common factors affecting mood are images in the mind and "self-talk" in response to what's going on around a person. Try this intervention technique: Spend about three or four uninterrupted minutes imagining something you thoroughly enjoy doing. See, hear, feel, and even smell the success of accomplishment. This technique forces a person to change the "self-talk" script. See if you don't notice a more desirable mood following the exercise. Your EAP is a helpful resource to discuss topics such as a "bad" mood.